

The President has asked for an additional \$5.6 billion from Congress to augment the Pentagon's overseas contingency operations account, the OCO. About \$3.4 billion of that would go to the operations against the Islamic State, and another \$1.6 billion would directly support the Iraqi training and equipping mission. I have no doubt that all or most of those funds will be included in the omnibus appropriations bill next week.

Mr. Speaker, if this doesn't add up to our forces being engaged in sustained military combat operations, then what in the world does? Many Members keep talking about prohibiting U.S. troops from having boots on the ground.

Mr. Speaker, we already have nearly 3,000 pairs of boots on the ground in Iraq, and I don't know how many people we have supporting and carrying out bombing missions because the Pentagon and the White House haven't told us.

Enough is enough. This House needs to draft, debate, and vote on whether to authorize this vast array of military operations known as Operation Inherent Resolve before we adjourn this year.

This war began under this Congress, the 113th Congress. It has escalated under the 113th Congress. It has expanded from Iraq to Syria and now to Turkey under the 113th Congress. It is the responsibility of the 113th Congress to authorize it or not. We need to take care of our business—real, serious, life-and-death business—before we walk out the door next week. We need to do our jobs.

No more excuses, no more whining about how the White House should send Congress a request. It is the institutional and constitutional duty of the Congress of the United States to decide matters of war and peace. It is time for the leadership of this House to step up to the plate and bring an authorization to the floor to be debated and voted on before we adjourn.

If not, then shame on this House and shame on the leadership for failing to carry out our most sacred duty to our uniformed men and women, their families, and the American people.

IN HONOR OF THE BRAVERY OF PRIVATE JOHN SIPE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. PERRY) for 5 minutes.

Mr. PERRY. Mr. Speaker, I call attention to the bravery exhibited during the Civil War by Private John Sipe during the Battle of Fort Stedman.

In addition, I recognize and commend the tireless efforts by his great-grandson, Mr. Reuben Troutman, a constituent of Pennsylvania's Fourth District, who has advocated for over a decade for the consideration of his great-grandfather to receive the Medal of Honor.

On March 25, 1865, Private Sipe's selfless actions in the face of grave danger

exhibited unparalleled bravery while fighting at the Battle of Fort Stedman with the 205th Regiment Pennsylvania Volunteers.

After Confederate forces succeeded in capturing Fort Stedman, the 205th Regiment made a gallant charge to counter the rebel attack. Although still considered to be in training status at that time, these brave Pennsylvanians managed to force the opposition back into Fort Stedman, halting the Confederate onslaught.

During the intense hand-to-hand combat that occurred in retaking the fort, Private Sipe displayed extreme heroism when, without concern for his own safety, he fearlessly charged the rebel lines and captured the Confederate flag.

The commander of the IX Army Corps, Major General John G. Parke, recommended to Army headquarters that Private Sipe be awarded the Medal of Honor for his valor and selflessness in capturing the enemy flag.

Mr. Speaker, I must explain that capturing this flag at the time was not like this game that you might have heard about of capturing the flag. At the time of the Civil War, just imagine the fire and the sound of cannonade, muskets, the screams of compatriots on either side of the line in trying to manage the battle.

It was the flag, it was the guidon, it was the standard, that showed the soldiers what action their unit was taking, and without it, it would render them impotent because there was no communication. There were no radios during the Civil War, so capturing the flag meant everything; not only was it symbolic, but it had a huge purpose in determining what that unit could, would, or would not do.

Although recommended to receive the award by the commanding general, according to the National Archives and Records Administration, Private Sipe, however, never received the Medal of Honor.

In a process that has spanned more than a decade, Private Sipe's only living relative—his great-grandson Reuben Troutman of Mechanicsburg, Pennsylvania—has worked with our office and the office of my predecessors to ensure that Private Sipe was given fair consideration for the Medal of Honor for which he was recommended.

Unfortunately, the Department of Defense determined this year that a lack of existing evidence precludes the award of the Medal of Honor for Private Sipe's bravery and service. Private Sipe's heroism warrants recognition, nonetheless.

Additionally, Reuben Troutman has dedicated an extensive amount of time over many years in researching his great-grandfather's contribution at the Battle of Fort Stedman, and he has worked diligently and tirelessly to bring to light historical facts of Private Sipe's military record.

I commend Reuben for his attention to detail, persistence, tenacity, and

zeal in seeking to honor his family heritage and for a valiant attempt at obtaining recognition for his great-grandfather's honorable and courageous service during the Civil War.

As a proud servicemember myself and as a combat veteran and on behalf of the millions of other uniformed personnel who have served after him, I thank not only Private Sipe, but also Mr. Troutman, for their selfless service and dedication to our Nation.

□ 1030

HUMAN DIGNITY FOR ALL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON LEE) for 5 minutes.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, in this season of reflection for many across the Nation, I will take a moment, first of all, to speak to my constituent Zeph to remind him that I have always supported the human dignity of all persons, and I will never fail to do so. I thank him for his warm embrace of those values and our commitment that we will continue to work together, which brings me to my concern of an ailing American who has continuously been held in Cuba.

I ask today on the floor of the House for the leadership of this government to continue to work diligently in the efforts to return Alan Gross to his family. I hope that we will join together, Republicans and Democrats, to work for his release and his return. I would note, Mr. Speaker, that I do not speak of the conditions of such, the reasons for such; just an American who is in failing health whom we need to work to bring home.

I think that is the kind of spirit of mercy that I would like to continue to speak of as we try to work our way through the understanding of the President's action on the executive order regarding immigration. It follows the directive of the Speaker of the House, who said:

A comprehensive approach to immigration reform is long overdue; and I am confident that the President, myself, and others can find the common ground to take care of this issue once and for all.

Spoken by Speaker BOEHNER in 2012.

Now, as we approach the new year, 2015, 3 years later, there has not been one vote on the floor of the House to bring mercy or relief to those who have been languishing in the shadows—not opening the borders, Mr. Speaker, but to really provide a framework for those who are here in the United States, almost as if there was a temporary pardon.

This is not, as the Judiciary Committee pounded over and over again yesterday, a change in the law. This is a work within the confines of the law under article II executive powers of the President and the language to take care. It is actually a recognition to frame, if you will, the interpretation that is given to laws of the land—

might I say, civil laws as well. Because in a civil law, there is punishment; under immigration laws, you can be deported, a civil penalty.

So the President has said, in an executive order narrowly confined and reviewed by legal counsel and constitutional experts, supported by 136 scholars, that said that the President is within his rights to stop deportation of store owners and childcare workers and high-tech workers, and particularly the parents of children who are, in fact, citizen children of legal permanent residents.

It is important for the American people to understand, there is no illegality here. There is no runaway Presidency here. There is an understanding that those who have status—not immigration status, not pathway to citizenship, but a temporary reprieve—almost like a pardon, yet it is more temporary, those children who have been deferred, all he did was to say that it should be 3 years and not 2 years. He has asked that the ICE officers be made, if you will, equal to other Federal law enforcement officers. I celebrate that. That is exciting.

Let me quickly say this, Mr. Speaker. I want to travel in the pathway of Reverend Dr. Sharon Stanley-Rea about immigration reform. Her words are, as I paraphrase them: We should choose our values for people over politics, community safety over partisan strategies, family unity and welcome over fear of foreigners, and humanitarian compassion for children and families above rhetoric and rancor.

Let me finally, Mr. Speaker, say that I want to, again, as I move to another topic, thank and compliment the protesters that were peaceful regarding the issue of Ferguson. I ask for people to understand these young people. I went out in Houston in the march and applauded them for the peacefulness of their protests. Now they are asking for us as legislators and policymakers to make a difference in their lives. I publicly say on the floor of the House they will not be forgotten.

I want AJ to know, who is an intern in my office from St. Louis, shot in gang fights, that he will not be forgotten. The work that he is doing will be remembered.

I ask the National Association of Chiefs of Police to join us in a discussion on how we best walk through these concerns. There are many legislative initiatives, but it has to be a combination of law enforcement, policymakers, civil rights leaders.

And to our police unions, let me say there are none of us that have not worked and stood alongside of you.

I want to say in closing, Mr. Speaker, on H.R. 5550, that I hope my colleagues will join me in making sure that funding is not used by local communities through their various traffic stops to fund their communities.

Let's make a difference on Ferguson, Mr. Speaker.

IMMIGRATION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. HOLDING) for 5 minutes.

Mr. HOLDING. Mr. Speaker, the issue is no longer whether Congress and the President can agree on immigration policy. The question is: Does a President have the power to alter our Nation's laws without passing new statutes?

Throughout the history of this great country, since the time of our Founding Fathers, the answer to this question has been "no." Yet President Obama struck a blow to the system of checks and balances that has been at the heart of our government and our Constitution for over 200 years.

The constitutionality of the President's actions are in question as the President has said time and time again that he does not have the constitutional authority to change our Nation's immigration laws on his own. From 2008 up to this August, at least 22 times the President has said that he couldn't ignore the laws on the books or create his own immigration laws.

In 2011, the President said: "America is a nation of laws, which means I, as the President, am obligated to enforce the law. I don't have a choice about that. That's part of my job."

"We've got three branches of government. Congress passes the law. The executive branch's job is to enforce and implement those laws. And then the judiciary has to interpret the laws. There are enough laws on the books by Congress that are very clear in terms of how we have to enforce our immigration system that for me to simply, through executive order, ignore those congressional mandates would not conform with my appropriate role as President."

Very well spoken, President Obama, the constitutional scholar that he is.

Mr. Speaker, this is the framework of our Nation's system of checks and balances. The Constitution is clear. It is clear that it is Congress' duty to write the laws, and it is the President's responsibility to enforce them.

While law enforcement agencies do have the inherent power to exercise prosecutorial discretion, the authority as to whether to enforce or not enforce the law against particular individuals, this power must be used judiciously and isn't an invitation to violate or ignore a law in its entirety. By granting amnesty to 5 million illegal immigrants, this administration has crossed the line from any justifiable use of its executive authority to a failure to faithfully execute the laws.

Mr. Speaker, whether you are a Democrat or a Republican, whether you agree or disagree with the President's policy on illegal immigrants and immigration, you cannot agree with the President's actions. No one is vested with the power to be both President and legislator.

INJUSTICE ANYWHERE IS A THREAT TO JUSTICE EVERYWHERE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas (Mr. AL GREEN) for 5 minutes.

Mr. AL GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to say thank you to the many persons who serve in law enforcement. They have difficult jobs, and they do their jobs well. I salute them.

I also salute the many persons who have been engaged in peaceful protests. What they have been attempting to do, I support. A peaceful protest is the best protest. Peaceful protests can make a difference in the lives of people. I know, because I stand here today because of peaceful protests.

I would like to continue what I started on yesterday, when I indicated that I would give a response today to a query that was made on Morning Joe. And I want my colleagues to know that I don't believe the query was made with malice aforethought. I think it was a genuine expression of concern. While intonations and expressions may connote otherwise to some, I believe that this is a question that should have been asked and that needs to be answered.

The question was: What is wrong with these people?—meaning three Members of Congress. What is wrong with these people that they would come to the well of the House of Representatives and they would hold their hands up? What is wrong with them?

Here is the answer, my dear brother: the same thing that was wrong with the Pilgrims and caused them to come to Plymouth Rock; the same thing that caused persons to throw tea into the Boston Harbor; the same thing that caused farmers to traverse the country on tractors and come to the United States Capitol to protest; the same thing that caused Rosa Parks to take a seat on a bus against the law; the same thing that caused Dr. King to march from Selma to Montgomery; the same thing that caused them to cross the Edmund Pettus Bridge on what is known as Bloody Sunday.

What is wrong with these people? They refuse to accept injustice. I refuse to accept injustice. What happened in Ferguson was an injustice. I refuse to accept injustice. Injustice anywhere is still a threat to justice everywhere. Dr. King was right. Injustice in Ferguson is a threat to justice in Houston, a threat to justice in Boston. Injustice anywhere is still a threat to justice everywhere.

And so I will continue to hold my hands up. I will continue to support those who engage in peaceful protest. Because holding one's hands up is an indication that you don't have anything that will be harmful, an indication that you are willing to move freely and give an opinion about something that you believe to be important. I think that this will symbolize a movement that will metamorphose far beyond the initial reason for it being developed. I am absolutely convinced